

# ***HIRE VALUE: CAREERS IN THE ARTS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES***

**December 1, 2003 - OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA**

**and**

**December 8, 2003 - LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART**

## **FINAL EVALUATION**

[Note: online downloadable version provided through the California Arts Council website only includes the narrative and no attachments.]

### **Included in Packet Distributed to Attendees**

- *Hire Value* Conference Agenda
- Brochure for California Arts Council's Arts and Accessibility Technical Assistance Program
- Arts License Plate Brochure
- *Hire Value* Conference Speakers' Biographies
- Arts, Culture & Creativity in California Information Sheet
- *Hire Value* Conference Break-out Sessions Schedule
- Participants List for Oakland
- Series of News Articles about the Arts from the *Sacramento Bee* newspaper

### **Other Materials Included in the Evaluation Packet**

- A. *Hire Value* Brochure for the Forums
- B. *Executive Summary: California Focus Groups on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities*
- C. Example of Large Print Materials
- D. An assortment of pictures taken at the forum
- E. A *Hire Value* Poster
- F. Advisory Committee List
- G. Infrastructure Development & Technical Assistance Program

## **Background and Introduction to the Project**

The California Arts Council (CAC), in partnership with VSA arts of California was awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, VSA arts and the National Arts and Disability Center at UCLA to host two forums on careers in the arts for people with disabilities.

Wayne D. Cook, ADA/504 Coordinator of the CAC and Leah Goodwin, President of VSA arts of California, partnered to submit a proposal for this funding. An important stipulation with the application required the state arts council and the statewide VSA to apply jointly. This important partnership enabled each organization to bring specific resources and expertise to the process in a focused effort to successfully convene the forums.

The theme of the forum, *Hire Value: Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities*, was a result of a national gathering of artists, arts administrators and arts organizations at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC which examined issues related to artists with disabilities and careers in the arts. One of many recommendations resulting from that meeting was to encourage state coalitions and partnerships to look at this issue on a local basis. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and VSA arts jointly committed funds to allow state arts councils and state VSA chapters to apply for grant money to encourage this conversation locally. There were five states awarded funding this year, which included California, Mississippi, Hawaii, Washington, and Puerto Rico.

In preparing to write the grant application, Wayne and Leah recognized the importance of having an effective and inclusive Advisory Committee that would serve as collaborators and regional leaders, and would include a wide cross section of the arts and disability community. (See exhibit F) The members of the advisory committee include individual artists with and without a disability, arts administrators, arts organizations and social service organizations, all of which have an interest or focus in the disability arts.

The majority of the Advisory Committee's conversation centered on the forums and ways in which the dialogue and recommendations could have a life *beyond* the forums, and ways the gatherings could benefit the larger community in a sustained way. The Committee acknowledged that state resources were diminishing and organizations such as the CAC and VSA arts have substantial difficulty in reaching all of their constituents, so the creation of a support system and network was not only a good idea, it was a necessity.

The CAC had funded a number of infrastructure groups representing many of the diverse constituents in the state. The Infrastructure Program allowed many like-minded individuals and organizations to meet and discuss how a network could benefit individuals and convey a unified vision to the community. The CAC currently has 14

infrastructure groups and all of them receive varying degrees of funding to connect, unite, and sustain those in their community. (See a complete listing on attachment F.)

Both Wayne and Leah realized a statewide infrastructure in the disability arts could be one of the many solutions in encouraging a broader participation in the arts and would give support to those individual artists with disabilities seeking to advance their career opportunities. The Advisory Committee was again brought together on a conference call to discuss the infrastructure idea and the idea of making this a focus of the forums. Everyone applauded the plan of building another infrastructure in the state, but was concerned about being inclusive and wanted to hear from a larger cross section of the community.

The Advisory Committee suggested the September date for the forum be moved to a later date in the year [2003]. This would allow more time for us to engage a larger audience in the dialogue. Delaying the forum aligned with the CAC's three-year plan to collaborate with the NADC in providing a series of outreach technical assistance workshops. Five regional focus meetings were conducted throughout the state to discuss arts and disability issues, and give the public an opportunity to provide input for the forums. The five regional meetings were held in San Diego, Los Angeles, Merced, San Francisco and Sacramento. (See enclosure B for an Executive Summary of those five regional meetings.)

The CAC's three-year plan and the National Arts and Disability Center provided funding for the meetings. An additional meeting was held by VSA arts of California to bring together district coordinators of the VSA chapters in their network to discuss pertinent VSA issues, but also included a discussion of the forums and the possible creation of an infrastructure. All of the meetings were extremely valuable and assisted the Committee in planning the upcoming forums.

Notes and highlights from each focus meeting were presented to the Advisory Committee and another conference call was held. Many local concerns and thematic issues were discussed. The committee utilized many of the suggested topics in formulating the content of the forums. Two forums would be held: at the Oakland Museum of California and at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. It also became clear from the focus groups that there were many individuals and organizations in the disability community who were ready and willing to accept responsibility in creating this network and in building an infrastructure.

As a result of the very detailed discussion, an agenda was created for the forum and, more importantly, an understanding that the forum would be the beginning of creating this network. With high hopes we agreed with the idea of this infrastructure development program and hoped it would be the fifteenth infrastructure group of the CAC. (See enclosure of packet items and agenda.)

The Advisory Committee members are a great asset in the creation of this network and are true partners in this effort. The successes of the forums were dependent on the wonderful assistance we received from all of our partners. (Please peruse the enclosed honor page for a description of all our partners.) We received support from individuals, organizations and from both museums. We received a wonderful commitment from the Social Security Administration who gave support for exhibit space and support materials. A hearty thanks to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities who gave scholarship money to assure access for any artist with a Developmental Disability to attend the conference free of charge. A special thanks to the ELA Foundation for providing Audio Descriptions, and a special thank you to all of the convening partners including VSA arts, NADC and the CAC for their vision and considerable contributions of time and resources.

In closing, we hired an outside evaluator to help us understand what occurred at the forums and to give us recommendations on next steps. Dr. Kathryn Hayward from UCLA evaluated the forums and we have attached her evaluation report. [Below.]



## **California Statewide Forums Evaluation Report**

### **Introduction**

California held two forums: one in Northern California (in Oakland on December 1, 2003) and in Southern California (in Los Angeles on December 8, 2003). This report is based on completed evaluations turned in by participants at both sites. One hundred and two evaluation forms were returned, 52 from Oakland, and 50 from Los Angeles. The following outlines the key findings from the various items on the evaluation.

### **Who Attended the Forums?**

The majority of forum participants stated they were artists (48%). There was also representation from arts organizations (15.7%) and disability organizations. Furthermore, there was representation from state agencies (7.8%), educators (7.8%), an administrator, and others who participated as parents of an individual with a disability and as psychologists.

Participants in the forums displayed high educational attainment. The majority of participants had completed graduate or professional degree (37.3%). Another quarter (25.5%) of the participants had a bachelor's degree. Many participants had some college experience (19.6%), while others had an associate arts degree (8.8%) or a

vocational/technical training certificate (4.9%). Two participants had received a high school diploma and one participant responded with some other form of education. Fifty-eight of the participants in the forums stated they had a disability (56.9%).

### **Artists with Disabilities**

Of the 58 participants who identified as an artist with a disability, half (29) considered themselves to be professional artists. There appeared a group of emerging artists (24.1%) as well as a few novice artists (8.6%) and hobby artists (6.9%). A few artists also classified themselves as some other type of artist (4.9%).

Artists with disabilities worked in multiple types of mediums, often more than one type. Artists worked most often in the mediums of visual arts (69.6%) followed by the literary arts and film, video, and digital arts (35.7%). Artists also expressed that they worked in theater (28.6%), music (16.1%), and dance (10.7%). The following table displays the number of artists who worked in each art medium and the percentage it represents.

<b>Art Medium</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Visual arts	39	69.6%
Literary arts	20	35.7%
Film, video, digital arts	20	35.7%
Theater	16	28.6%
Music	9	16.1%
Dance	6	10.7%

### **Artists' Education, Age, and Sources of Income**

Artists with disabilities expressed a range of arts education experiences. Of the 55 artists who responded, many artists stated that they were self-taught (14). However, there were also numerous artists who received formal training through a graduate degree in the arts (12) or a college degree in the arts (10). Additionally, artists received training from art colleges (6), apprenticeships (5), high school arts classes (4), and other arts experiences (4).

Fifty artists with disabilities reported their age. The average age of artists with disabilities was 42 years old. The age of artists with disabilities ranged from 20 years old to 61 years old. Half of the artists who reported their age were between 20 and 43 years old, while another half were between 44 and 61 years old.

Not all artists with disabilities responded to questions regarding income generated from art, non-art, and SSI. Forty-nine artists stated their art income. The most common responses were either that they received no income from art (15) or that they generated all income from their art (10).

A large group of the 47 artists who responded to the income question regarding non-art activities stated they received no income (23) from non-art activities while 11 artists stated they generated 90% or more of their income from non-art related activities.

Of the 46 artists who stated how much of their income came from SSI, 20 artists stated they did not receive any SSI. Seven artists stated they received 100% of their income from SSI. The others responded in a range from 5% to 99%.

While there were a few cases where artists received income from a variety of sources, it appears that often it is a case of all or nothing. Additionally, 15 artists reported they were clients of the Department of Rehabilitation.

### **Long-Term Goals of Artists with Disabilities**

Artists expressed similar long-term career goals across both forum sites. While artists expressed their goals in various ways, three main themes appeared. The first is that artists want to do their art, whether it be ceramics, sewing, music, writing, producing, acting, and so on. Secondly, artists want to make a living from doing their art. For some, this meant surviving. For others, this meant becoming self-sufficient and having a comfortable life. The third theme somewhat combines the elements of doing art and making money from it. Artists want their art to be recognized whether it is through publishing of their work, performing their work, exhibiting their work, and becoming known within their art discipline.

### **Obstacles to Building a Career in the Arts**

Artists with disabilities also expressed numerous obstacles to building their career in the arts. The major obstacles frequently expressed by artists in both forums include:

- Attitude towards an arts career
  - Art is not seen as a viable career by family, friends, Vocational Rehabilitation, etc.
- Financial
  - Funding for the arts in general
  - Artists not often compensated for their work.
  - Few opportunities with benefits (health care)
  - Expense of receiving more training, going back to school
  - The current economy--no jobs in community
  - Time to do art
- Need for marketing skills
  - Finding places to exhibit art
  - Finding an agent
  - Knowledge of the business
  - No mentors

- Disability
  - Attitudes about disability and assumptions of what one can do
  - Discrimination, lack of access
  - One's disability can make it difficult to do art
  - Knowing when or whether to disclose a non-visible disability
  - People look at art through a disability lens, not sure if work is of real quality

### **Other Participants (Employment Support Service Providers)**

Participants who attended the forum in a role other than as an artist with a disability responded to a few additional questions regarding their level of information to assist individuals with disabilities in a career in the arts and intention to provide employment opportunities. The statements were recorded on a Likert type scale from 1 to 6 with 1 corresponding to strongly agree and 6 corresponding to strongly disagree. The most common response of the 31 participants were to slightly agree with the statement “I feel I have the resources and information I need to assist artists with disabilities seek employment in the arts.” Participants (sample =27) seemed a bit more confident in their ability to provide employment opportunities for artists with disabilities (average =2.03).

Participants (sample of 28) demonstrated a great deal of experience in working with people with disabilities. The average length of working with people with disabilities was 14 years. The range of experience was from one year to 40 years. Half of the participants worked with individuals with disabilities for 10 years or fewer, while another half worked with individuals with disabilities between 13 and 40 years.

### **Response to the Forums**

All participants responded to statements regarding the extent to which the forum:

- brought together a diverse group to address careers in the arts for artists with disabilities,
- increased their level of understanding about careers in the arts for people with disabilities,
- encouraged discussion between participants,
- addressed obstacles for artists with disabilities in seeking a career in the arts,
- generated strategies to resolve obstacles for people with disabilities, and
- encouraged the participants' to continue contact with those they met at the forum.

Participants responded to the statements using a Likert type scale from 1 to 6 with 1 corresponding to strongly agree and 6 corresponding to strongly disagree.

Participants expressed a high desire to continue contact with individuals and organizations they met at the forum (average score=1.94). Participants also strongly agreed the forum encouraged discussion between artists with disabilities, arts



organizations, and state agencies (average score =2.08), and felt the forum brought together a representative group to discuss careers in the arts including artists with disabilities, arts educators, social service and employment services representatives, and potential employers (average score=2.12).

Participants expressed more variation in how they felt the forums addressed obstacles for artists with disabilities in seeking a career in the arts (average score=2.34) as well as the extent the forum generated strategies to resolve obstacles for people with disabilities in seeking a career in the arts (average score=2.56). Participants (average score=2.77)

### **Issues Addressed by Forum, Issues to be Addressed, and Next Steps**

Participants of the forum had the opportunity to respond to open-ended questions regarding their thoughts on what were the most important issues addressed at the forum, what they wish had been addressed that wasn't, their next steps, and any additional comments they had.

Overall, participants felt the most important issue addressed at the forum was the need for an arts network/infrastructure.

Other important issues were:

- the need for stronger advocacy and community action for people with disabilities and for the arts,
- arts funding issues,
- the need for the disability and arts communities to work together as well as the need for unity within different art mediums and art organizations, and
- hearing about other artists' struggles and successes.

Participants expressed numerous issues they wished had been discussed at more length. A key theme that appeared was the desire to develop specific strategies and techniques for career advancement, and to learn of what job opportunities are available. Participants also wanted to discuss how the infrastructure will actually happen and to set specific goals to ensure its success. Related to this, participants were interested in finding models of programs to learn from their successes and failures. Participants were eager to learn more about the resources that out there (i.e., grants, venues, PASS plans, etc.) and how to utilize them. The issue of integration of organizations and artists was one that participants wanted to discuss further, along with both the pros and cons of organizing around integration. Others were interested in addressing accessibility and compliance issues within venues.

Participants expressed a commitment to building an arts network/infrastructure through stating their next steps after the forum. The most common response was that participants planned to network with those they had met at the forums and to outreach to other organizations and individuals to tell them about the forums. This included participants

offering to use their talents for the infrastructure, attend future meetings, look for others working in the field, set up local networks by discipline, provide information about network on their websites, and outreach to artists with disabilities. Advocacy was another major action participants intended to take. Participants intended to organize attacks against the repeal of the Lanterman Act, investigate ways to become more independent, contact current legislators about disabilities and the arts, press art galleries and art supporters to put their money where their mouth is.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, participants were very appreciative of the forums and excited about the development of an arts network. A few expressed additional comments about the forum, such as having a weekend conference or opportunities to attend more than one breakout session. Participants felt that breakout sessions could provide the action steps for the infrastructure and look forward to being involved.